

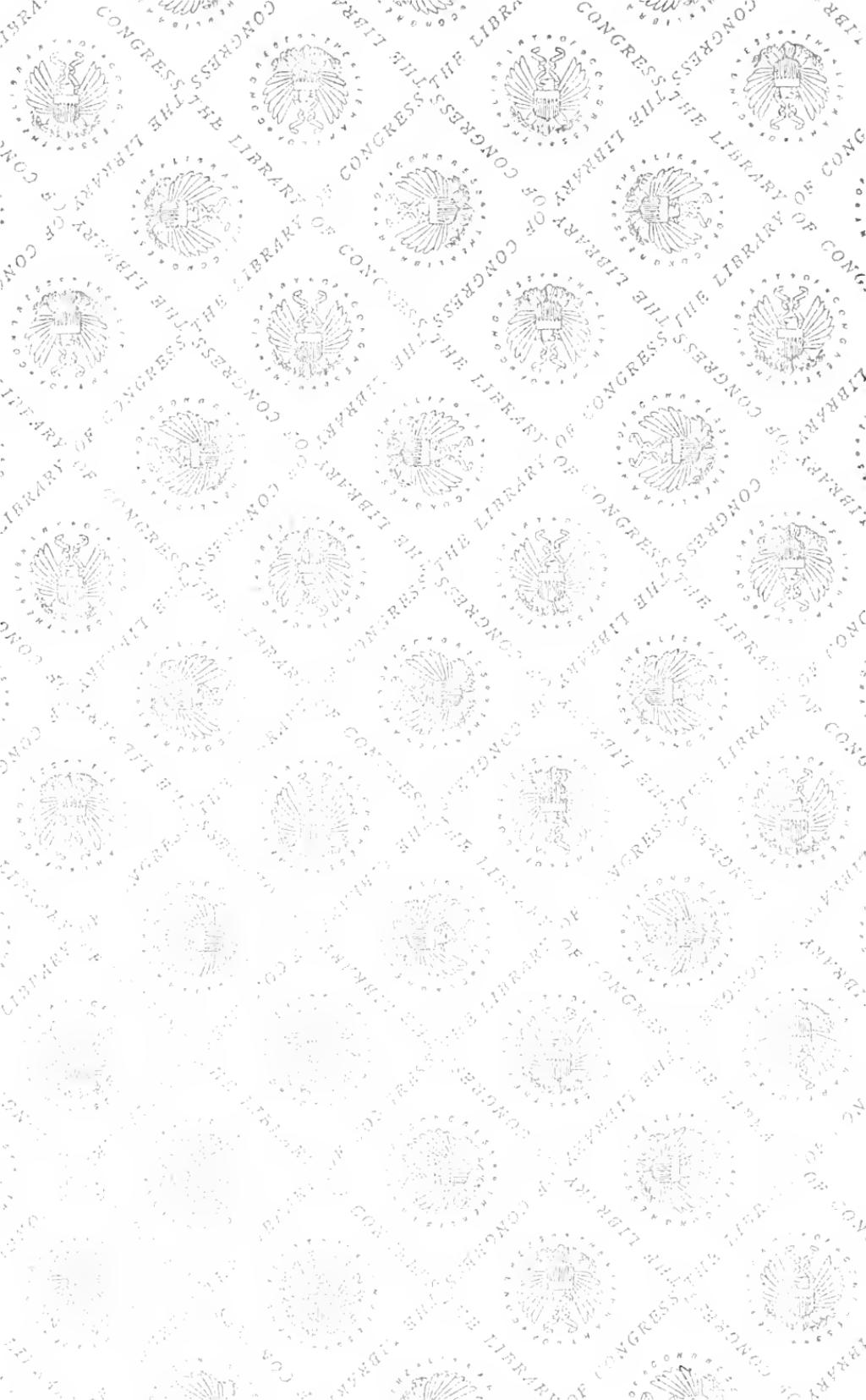
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# THE VALLEY OF THE HUDSON IN THE DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION

BY

**GRACE M. PIERCE**

HISTORIAN OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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# IN THE VALLEY OF THE HUDSON

IN THE DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION.

by

GRACE M. PIERCE,

Historian of the State of New York,

D. A. R.

From the day that Hendrick Hudson entered New York harbor and sailed up the river, the valley of the Hudson has abounded in tradition and legendary lore. A few of the Indian traditions have come down to us, and more of the legends of the early Dutch settlers—of Anthony's Nose, Sleepy Hollow, and Rip Van Winkle; tales of pirates and the smuggling trade, including the renowned Captain Kidd. Throughout the Colonial history, under both Dutch and English control, it was the centre of commerce; and settlements in the Province of New York were made along its course. But with the beginning of our Revolutionary history, and the formation of our national government, it was transformed from a colonial to a national centre, and has been intimately associated with our national life from that time to the present. It is the period of Revolutionary history of which we are principally to treat in this review, and being impossible to give in detail all the events therewith, it is the desire to call attention to them in a general rather than in a minute manner.

The American Revolution really began in the year when Great Britain attempted, through regulations of Parliament, to put an end to the smuggling trade. Because of their location, the

large towns along the coast had, even at that time, become commercial markets of considerable importance. The value of a sea-board location, coupled with a river front, was especially favorable, and such towns as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia became ports of special entry. The West Indies, with their tropical wealth, and their proximity to the eastern coast were favorite trading grounds, and under the various imposts levied by England, it is not surprising that the traffic in contraband goods grew apace. Life in the western continent so far from the governing power, tended to develop a lack of respect for the Mother Country, and a distaste and consequent disregard for the restrictions it placed upon what these people came to regard as their natural rights. The sentiment increased: that law-makers at a distance could not, and did not, sympathize with, or understand, the needs and conditions of the people for whom they legislated. Consequently, when, in 1764, the Parliament of Great Britain passed certain restrictions upon what they deemed illicit trade between the American Colonies and their tropical neighbors, the traders and merchants of the several Colonies were quick to feel themselves personally aggrieved. Organizations under various designations, in New York known as Trader's and Merchant's Associations, held secret meetings, and discussed ways and means to care for their own interests. Previous to this, a series of Navigation acts had forbidden trade with any other country than England, or to be carried on in any but English ships. The Colonies were not permitted to manufacture their raw material into other form. This, in all cases, must be transported to England, and returned to the Colonies, in products subject to heavy duties. Taxes had been levied on sugar, molasses, and all articles of foreign luxury; and in defiance of these laws had grown a traffic which the British government was pleased to designate the "Smuggling trade." In 1763 the tax on sugar and molasses were reduced, but other articles were transferred from the free, to the tax list and increased power was given to the Admiralty Courts, and the Royal Collectors of Customs; and in addition to these, the Stamp Act was formulated. Meetings were everywhere held by the indignant citizens of the Colonies, and petitions were forwarded to Parliament protesting against these acts. New York was foremost in these proceedings, and on the 18th

of March, 1764, the Assembly adopted and forwarded a Memorial of Protest, to the Ministry of Great Britain. But this document was never presented; as it was couched in such decided terms that no member of Parliament could be found who was bold enough to bring it before the House. The petitions from the other Colonies were less strong,—were received: considered, and rejected. On March 22, 1765, the Stamp Act was passed.

In New York the news was received with great indignation; and copies of the Act, with a Death's head affixed, and labelled—"The Folly of England, and the Ruin of America"—were carried about the streets.

England also claimed the right of "Impressment," which led to one of the first demonstrations of the "Sons of Liberty," who were now reorganized in the city, and forming new societies throughout the Colonies. The leaders of this Association were true and tried patriots and through a London correspondent they were kept informed of the movements of the British government, and thwarted its plans in every way possible. At this time, too, the project of a general union of the Colonies for mutual protection, was formulated; and a Congress of Colonial Delegates was summoned to meet in New York. On October 7, 1765, twenty-eight Delegates from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, South Carolina, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, assembled in the City Hall in Wall Street. Here the Declaration of Rights was adopted; and a respectful address to the King, and a Memorial to both Houses of Parliament were drawn up and signed by a majority of the members.

The Stamp Act was to go into effect November first. On the evening of the 31st of October the Merchant's Association of the town assembled at Burn's Coffee-House, and adopted the first non-important agreement of the Colonies. Thus, the Merchants of New York City were the first to sacrifice their commercial interests for the cause of liberty. A non-importation Association was also formed, and a Committee appointed to correspond with the other Colonies.

While the Congress had been in session, a ship bearing the stamps had arrived in the harbor, but the demonstrations of the people had prevented the unlading of the cargo. The Lt.

Governor, however, sought to carry out the law; the stamps were brought ashore, and immediately placards bearing the following notice were posted about the streets:

"Pro Patria!"

The first man that either  
distributes or makes use of Stamt  
Paper, let him take Care of  
his House, Person, & Effects.

Vox Populi.

We dare!"

The demonstrations of the Sons of Liberty during the following days, on the Commons, and finally on the Bowling Green, led to the abandonment of all attempts to enforce the Act; and the delivery of all the stamps to the Americans for safe keeping. They were deposited in the City Hall. On the 20th of May, 1766, the news of the repeal of the Stamp Act reached the New York Colony, and great demonstrations of rejoicing ensued. The fourth of June, the King's birthday, was set apart for a celebration; the crowning event of the day being the erection on the Common, of a pole or mast, inscribed: "The King—Pitt—and Liberty." This became the famous Liberty-Pole, about which cluster so many of the opening scenes of the Revolution.

A few days later, an assembly of the people, gathered at Burns' Coffee House, petitioned the Assembly to erect a statue in honor of William Pitt. An equestrian statue of George III was also decided upon, which was erected on the Bowling Green, in front of Fort George August 21, 1770. This was the famous leaden statue, which, a few years later, was pulled down by the patriots, and melted into bullets. The marble statue of Pitt also remained but a short time, as it was mutilated by the British soldiers, when they took possession of the city in 1775. The Liberty-Pole, erected on the King's birthday, 1766, now became the rallying point for patriotic demonstrations; and for frequent encounters between the Sons of Liberty and the British soldiers stationed in New York to guard the city. The soldiers repeatedly cut it down; and the "Sons" as often replaced it. The Declaration Act, and the Mutiny Act, soon followed the repeal of the Stamp Act. The citizens of New York sought through the Assembly to compromise the latter by the "Limited Supply

Bill"; the Governor was compelled to submit this to the Home Government, and in reply received a severe reprimand, and a positive refusal to accept it for the Assembly.

The Assembly at once made a bold and decisive reply, arguing well for the position it had taken. The Governor prorogued the Assembly, and reported to Parliament. In reply, both Houses of Parliament at once passed a law, suspending the legislative power of the Assembly, and forbidding the Governor to assent to any bill until the Mutiny Act was first complied with. The Assembly refused to recognize the suspension; declaring such action to be unconstitutional, and proceeded to transact business as before. Following closely upon the Mutiny Act, came the tax on the importation of Tea, Glass, Paper, &c. The Sons of Liberty at once became active; and the Non-Importation Act was affirmed.

While this agreement was entered into, and nominally maintained, historians assert that New York, alone, remained perfectly true to her engagement; while the other Colonies continued to import nearly half as much as before. A tabulated statement, enclosed in a letter to Gov. Trumbull, by a resident of New England, and compiled from official sources, shows that the exportations from England to New York, had fallen off in 1768 to £74,000, from £482,000 in 1767; and the writer adds: "How forcibly would the commercial argument have appeared, had all the Colonies abated in the proportion New York has done; who seems to have imported only the articles allowed in the Agreement." For four years the Colony of New York, kept strictly to her pledge, and confined her importations to the free list; and when the tax was finally withdrawn from all articles except tea; and the Colonies planned to resume importations with this single exception, the merchants of New York willingly acceded to the proposition, and as they had been the first to propose the compact, and the only ones to keep it inviolate, they were now the last to abandon it.

The "Rebel" Assembly was finally dissolved by the Governor, and a new election ordered. The newly elected Body followed for a time, loyally in the path of their predecessors, but gradually certain members were won over to the will of the Royal Governor, and a scheme was matured for raising funds from the people by the issuance of Bills of Credit. This measure met

with the general censure of the people; and by a call of the Sons of Liberty for an Assembly in the "Fields," to express disapproval of the action. Inflammatory articles were printed, charging the Assembly with betrayal of trust and the author was arrested and confined in jail, where he at once became the idol of the people. When brought to trial, he was acquitted. Meantime the contests about the Liberty-Pole, between the British soldiers, and the Sons of Liberty became frequent. The soldiers attempted to blow it up, failed three times, but succeeded the fourth time. Whereat the Sons, and the people at large were enraged; and the following day notices were posted for a meeting of Protest, to be held on the Commons. There Resolutions were adopted regarding the presence of armed soldiers below the rank of Orderly on the streets after roll-call. Also stating that their employment by citizens when off duty, was a constant menace to the peace of the city. The Resolutions were dignified; but the following day, soldiers were found posting scurrilous notices regarding the Sons of Liberty. These were arrested, and taken before the Mayor; who ordered a reinforcement of soldiers which appeared on the scene, to retire; which they did, being followed by the citizens as far as Golden Hill (in John Street, between William and Cliff Streets). Here they were joined by another reinforcement, and the order was given to charge. In the attack which followed several peaceful citizens were wounded. Several soldiers were also wounded, by citizens acting in self-defense. A party of officers finally arrived, and ordered the soldiers to their barracks. The following morning, the soldiers renewed hostilities, by various acts of aggression, and about noon came into collision with a party of sailors. During the fray, an old man among the sailors was bayoneted. The trouble continued throughout the day; ending by the rout of the soldiers, who were driven into their barracks by the Sons of Liberty. This "Battle of Golden Hill" occurred two months before the Boston Massacre. This was fought in defense of principle, and was really the "first blood shed" of the American Revolution.

In the meantime, the Mayor's Common Council, having refused to grant the request for privilege to erect another Liberty Pole, a small plot of ground was purchased by a few of the Sons of Liberty, on the Commons, and in February,

1770, the fifth Liberty Pole in the city was raised. This was a mast of great length, sunk twelve feet into the ground, and encased for two-thirds of its height with iron hoops, firmly riveted by iron bars, and bore the motto: "Liberty and Property." A great demonstration was made by the people over this event, and though the soldiers made several subsequent attacks, in their efforts to remove this, they were unsuccessful; and the pole remained until after the occupation of the city by the British army, when it was finally thrown down.

For nearly two years matters were fairly peaceful in the city. The resumption of the import trade, in all articles except tea, caused the return of fairly prosperous conditions. But England still insisted on the right of taxation, and in 1773, the Ministry decided to force the use of tea upon the Colonies; and although the measures adopted, permitted the Americans to purchase the tea for less than their friends in England, since the impost tax was maintained, they still refused to accept it. As soon as the news reached America, that Parliament had passed these measures, and that large shipments of tea had been ordered for the Colonies, the meetings of the Sons of Liberty were resumed in New York; while another organization, known as the "Mohawks" was created, whose members pledged themselves to take charge of the tea-ships on their arrival. The tea left England on the 25th of October, but the winter was severe; and it was the 18th of April, 1774, when the Nancy, buffeted for months by wind and wave, arrived off Sandy Hook. The Pilots, true to their orders, refused to guide them up the bay; and a delegation of the Vigilance Committee took possession of the ship. The consignee refused to receive the cargo, and advised the Captain to return with it to England; which advice was strongly seconded by the Vigilance Committee. On the 22nd of April, the London, another tea-ship, arrived. The Captain declared he had no tea on board, and was finally permitted to approach the city. A crowd assembled on the wharf, awaited it, and at once declared its intention of searching the ship, when the Captain admitted having one chest of tea—his own personal property—on board. The Vigilance Committee, thereupon adjourned to the Coffee House, taking the Captain with them,

and the Mohawks were ordered to attend to their duty at an hour appointed. The people, however, indignant, and impatient, refused to wait for the Mohawks. Boarding the ship, they broke open, and threw overboard eighteen chests of tea. The Boston Tea-Party, with its Mohawk masqueraders, has a prominent place in story; the New York Tea-Party, has been overlooked and almost forgotten. The latter even was not attended with the picturesque features of that in New England. Possibly the old Dutch stolidity did not lend itself to the suggestion of disguise and fantastic garb. At all events, the tea cargo of the London was over-hauled in Whitehall Slip, in open day, by men undisguised, and of such determination as to willingly meet the responsibility of their acts. The East River received the eighteen chests of tea; and in all probability an east wind carried inland as strong a Hyson flavor as ever emanated from Boston Harbor.

The following day, the Nancy, carrying the two captains, and under the guard of a detachment of the Vigilance Committee, sailed for England; the guard remaining with the ship until it was three leagues from Sandy Hook.

Incensed at the manner in which the tea was received in the Colonies, the English Government retaliated by ordering the port of Boston to be closed. As soon as this news reached New York, advertisements appeared, calling a meeting of the Merchant's and Trader's Association, at the Coffee-House in Wall Street, to consider "the late extraordinary and alarming advices from England," and consult on measures proper to be pursued in the present critical and important moment. On Monday evening, they met at the house of Mr. Sam Fraunces —a restaurant kept by one Samuel Fraunces, a West Indian, and a noted resort for merchants and ship-owners. It was in the "Long Room" of this tavern that this meeting was held, and from this time it became a famous meeting place for the patriots. Later when the American army was in possession of the city, Washington, for a time, made his head-quarters here; and on December 4th, 1782, after peace had been declared, and the Continental army disbanded, the officers assembled here to take farewell of their Commander-in-Chief.

While the above invitation was to the merchants, there seems to have been no restriction placed on guests, and the

room was crowded to its utmost capacity. At the Exchange the same night a new Citizen's Committee of Fifty-one was nominated, to correspond with the other Colonies, and a general meeting of the people was called, for the 19th, to reject or confirm the ticket. It was confirmed at that time. Prior to this, a letter had been received from the Sons of Liberty in Boston, urging a renewal of the Non-Importation Act. A majority of the New York Committee did not favor this, but recommended a General Congress of Deputies from all the Colonies instead. The Sons of Liberty thought this recommendation too moderate, and called a meeting of the people in the Fields, on the evening of July 6th, to discuss this action. An immense crowd assembled, and resolutions were passed denouncing the Boston Port Bill, and sustaining the action of the people of that city; and a subscription was open for their relief. The Non-Importation agreement was renewed; the Congress recommended by the Committee of Fifty-one was approved; and it was further resolved that the deputies from New York should be elected at once. These were to be instructed to insist upon the enforcement of the Non-Importation Act by the Colonies, until every duty had been repealed. This meeting has been of special interest since, because of the fact that during the evening Alexander Hamilton, then a college student, made his first appearance as a public speaker.

The nominations for deputies to the proposed Congress were made by the Committee of Fifty-one, and a Committee of Mechanics; and the elections were ordered to be conducted under the inspection of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen; all tax-payers being allowed to vote.

This second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia, and adopted a Declaration of Colonial Rights, the composition of which was attributed to John Jay. In it the Colonies protested against the standing armies, and Parliamentary taxation; declared the eleven Acts which had been passed for the Colonies during the reign of George the third unconstitutional; since they were infringements on the rights of British subjects, all of whose privileges they claimed for themselves. They formed an American Association, pledged to import no goods from Great Britain, or the West Indies, until these several Acts were repealed; and forbidding traders

to advance the price of goods in consequence of this agreement: They denounced the slave-trade; urged the citizens to encourage home manufacture, and the development of their native resources, and appointed Vigilance Committees to see that none of these regulations were evaded.

In New York the political aspect of the Assembly was such that it was impossible to secure an endorsement of these resolutions and on April 3rd, 1775, the Assembly adjourned, never to be re-convened. A Committee of Sixty was then appointed, to attend to the enforcement of the foregoing resolutions. A duty which was promptly performed. As the Assembly had adjourned without providing for the appointment of delegates to the next Colonial Congress, it was decided that they should be chosen by a Provincial Congress, composed of delegates from the several counties of the State. This Congress assembled in New York, April 20, 1775; representatives being present from the counties of New York, Westchester, Dutchess, Albany, Ulster, Orange, Kings, Suffolk, and two towns in Queens. This was the first Provincial Congress in New York, and five delegates were elected to attend the Continental Congress which assembled in Philadelphia the following month.

On the 24th of April, 1775, the news of the Battle of Lexington reached the city. Although Sunday, the usual services of the day were suspended; the Sons of Liberty at once assembled, and took possession of the City Hall and the Arsenal; distributing the arms stored there to the citizens, a committee of whom was at once organized, and assumed the temporary government of the city. The Custom House was closed, and an embargo laid upon the vessels in port destined for the eastern Colonies. A Committee of One Hundred was chosen to have charge of municipal affairs "until the Continental Congress should order otherwise." The citizens pledged themselves to obey the orders of the Committee; and the city assumed the appearance of a siege. Military stores for the royal troops were seized, and these arms were afterwards used by the first troops raised in the Colony by order of the Continental Congress. They were nearly lost to the Americans, however. The British troops, temporarily stationed there, awaiting further orders, having received permission to

depart "with their arms and accoutrements" attempted to carry away with them the spare arms. They were promptly stopped, and compelled to deliver the extra arms to the patriots.

Meanwhile, almost in the shadow of the upper valley of the Hudson, the Forts of Ticonderoga and Crown Point had been captured by men from New England; the Battle of Bunker Hill had been fought, and Washington, on his way to New England, had been met, and escorted through the city by the provincial militia. The Continental Congress had ordered the Colony of New York to contribute her quota of 3,000 men for the general defense. This Colony, unlike the New England settlements, was unable to proceed further in the struggle, without a complete change of government. In New England, the Constitutions enabled the citizens to elect their own governors; but New York was still a royal province, with Governor and Governor's Council appointed by the King; and the Colony was now under the rule of two rival forms of government, both claiming to be the only legal authority, hence it was with much greater difficulty that the Provincial government gained control, and all their acts were subject to interference: as when the Provincial Congress, regarding the guns on the Battery as dangerous to the patriot's cause, ordered them removed to be used in the Highland fortifications. A party of the Sons of Liberty and citizens undertook to carry out the order; but while thus engaged, were fired upon by the crew of the *Asia*, an English ship at anchor in the bay.

On the 14th of April, 1776, Washington arrived from Boston (the British having evacuated that city), and assumed command of the American forces gathered in New York City. During the season, the publication of "Common Sense," by Thomas Paine, in Philadelphia, brought the latent spirit of independence which had been gathering force, to the point of expression and action; and several of the Colonies instructed their delegates to the Continental Congress to throw aside all hesitation, and take an open and decided stand for independence and separation from the Mother Country. On the 7th day of June, the subject was introduced for debate by Richard Henry Lee, who offered a resolution: "That the United Colonies are, and ought to be, free and independent

States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that their political connection with Great Britain is, and ought to be totally dissolved." A spirited debate followed, and the delegates from seven Colonies voted for the resolution. As a result, a Committee, consisting of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman and Robert R. Livingston were appointed to draft a Declaration of Independence, which was adopted on the fourth of July. On the tenth of July, the news reached New York, where it was received with the greatest enthusiasm. Orders were at once issued for the several brigades of troops then in the city, to meet on the Commons, at six o'clock in the evening, to hear the document read. At the appointed hour, the soldiers formed a hollow square, within which were Washington, and his Aides. As the reading ended, the enthusiasm of the people exceeded all bounds, and rushing in a body to the City Hall, they tore down, and rent in pieces the portrait of George the third; and thence proceeding to Bowling Green, they overthrew the leaden statue, erected a few years before, and dragged it through the streets. Later this statue was hacked to pieces, and the pieces sent to Governor Wolcott of Connecticut, whose wife and daughters melted and molded the material into bullets, which were used by the patriots with good effect in the later battles.

Ever since the evacuation of Boston, the arrival of the British troops had been daily expected in New York; and Washington had endeavored to put the city into the best possible preparation for defense. It may be interesting at this time, to know the principal places where fortifications or defenses had been prepared. It had been strongly fortified for attacks by sea. On the southern point, in close proximity to Bowling Green, were the Grand Battery, mounting twenty-three guns, with the battery of Fort George, immediately above it. On the shore of the North River, were McDougal's Battery on a hill a little to the west of Trinity Church; the Grenadier's Battery some distance above, and beyond this the Jersey Battery. On the East River were Coenties' Battery on Ten Eyck's wharf, Waterbury's Battery at the shipyards, Badlam's Battery on Rutger's Hill in the vicinity of the Jewish burial ground in Chatham Street; Thompson's

Battery at Hoorne's Hook, and the Independent Battery on Bayard's Mount, later known as Bunker Hill. Breastworks were erected at Peck, Beekman, Burling, Coenties, and Old Slips; at the Coffee-House, the Exchange, in Broad and several other streets. Fortifications were erected on Governor's Island, Paulus Hook, Brooklyn Heights and Red Hook; and a line of works was thrown up on Long Island, from Fort Greene, on Wallabout Bay, to Gowanus Creek, within which nine thousand men were encamped. The passages of both the East and North Rivers were obstructed by chains and sunken vessels. The troops on Long Island were in charge of General Greene assisted by General Sullivan; General Nathaniel Woodhull was ordered to forage on Long Island for the troops, while General Washington remained in command of New York City.

On the 25th of June, the long expected British army under General Howe, arrived at Sandy Hook, and a month later had landed on Staten Island, where the loyalists soon flocked to his camp, giving valuable assistance from their knowledge of the country. He was soon joined by his brother, Admiral Lord Howe, with fresh forces from England, and by General Clinton, from the south. These combined forces, aside from the Tories, numbered twenty-four thousand of the best disciplined troops of England. To oppose this well equipped and disciplined army, Washington had gathered about twenty thousand militia, nearly one-half of whom were invalids, or detailed for other duty, and many more were destitute of arms or ammunition.

Soon after the British fleet arrived at Staten Island, Admiral Howe, having been commissioned by the British Government to treat for peace with "the rebels," thought to begin negotiations with the American leader, and addressed a letter to "George Washington, Esq." The Aide who met the messenger, politely informed him that he knew of no such person. Thereupon Howe sent again, addressing his letter to "George Washington," etc., and again the Aide declined to receive the missive, saying that he knew of none but *General* Washington in the camp. As Howe was unwilling to recognize any military rank in connection with the arch-rebel, he abandoned all further attempts at communication.

Washington had evidently expected the British to make a direct attack on New York; on the contrary, Howe decided to take Long Island first, and in the latter part of August transferred a large body of troops from Staten Island to Gravesend. Because of General Graeme's illness, General Putnam was ordered in charge of Long Island, and being ignorant of the country, withdrew the guards from certain points, which was discovered by the British. By a ruse, they hemmed in the American forces, and in the battle that ensued, the Americans experienced a severe loss. The contest raged for several days; when Washington, who had crossed from New York, after a council with his officers, decided to evacuate the island; and in the evening of August 29th, under cover of a heavy fog, and a fine drizzling rain, the embarkation of the American army began; passing under the bows of the British fleet to the mainland. Washington superintended this embarkation himself, and was among the last to leave the island. By sunrise of the following morning, the entire army, with its baggage, stores, wounded and prisoners, were safely landed on the opposite shore.

Evidently thinking this an opportune time to open negotiations for surrender, Howe now endeavored to treat with the Continental Congress; promising repeal of all obnoxious laws, and pardon to all who would now lay down their arms. The Commissioners sent by Congress, Adams, Franklin and Rutledge, met him for a conference on Staten Island, and refused to treat for peace on any other terms than the full and perfect acknowledgment of the independence of the Colonies.

With the investment by sea, and the neighboring islands, it now became apparent to the Americans, that New York City must be abandoned to the British army. To evacuate too soon, would give an advantage to the enemy; to linger too long would be fatal to the Americans. Washington watched the situation closely, and ordered the military stores to be removed across the river. A force was stationed at King's bridge, the main body of the army was moved to Harlem Heights, a small force remaining in the city under General Putnam. Unable to obtain the slightest clue to the movements of Howe, Washington resolved to send a trusty spy to penetrate the enemy's lines in disguise, and obtain the neces-

sary information. At this time, Washington was making his headquarters at the house of Robert Murray, on Murray Hill. Later he moved to the house of Col. Roger Morris, an old comrade of the French and Indian wars, but who, in this struggle of the Colonies, had remained loyal to the home government. His estate was consequently confiscated. Tradition says that it was at this place that the brave young patriot, Nathan Hale, sought an interview, and offered his services to pass the British lines and bring back the desired information. The story of Hale's successful attempt, and his subsequent discovery, arrest and execution has thrilled every American heart with admiration for his cleverness, and recognition of his bravery and loyal devotion to his cause, in the very face of death. His last words, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country," are enshrined in the Heart of the Nation.

Soon after Hale departed on his perilous mission, the British ships advanced up the rivers, and under cover of their fire, a portion of their army landed at Kipp's Bay, at the foot of Thirty-sixth Street. The American guards retired, without offering opposition, followed by two Connecticut brigades, an action which roused Washington's indignation, and filled him with despair. Knowing he could no longer hold the enemy in check, he retired with his remaining force to Kingsbridge. Howe advanced to the centre of the island, and encamped at Inkleuberg Hill. A detachment of the American forces, having become bewildered, and lost their way, were in danger of being captured by the British; they were overtaken, however, by Col. Burr, who led them along the swamp to the woods surrounding the house of Robert Murray, at Inkleuberg Hill, and thence to the Apthorpe House on the Bloomingdale road, where Washington awaited them.

Meantime, at the Murray House, Mistress Murray, a gentle Quaker lady, knowing the straits of the Americans, entertained the British officers, including Howe, Clinton and Tryon, who had stopped there for refreshment. The entertainment, prolonged as much as possible by the hostess, was interrupted by an excited messenger, bringing news of the escape of the American troops. Immediate pursuit followed and fifteen

minutes after Washington had left the Apthorpe House, it was occupied by the British troops.

The following day occurred the skirmish of Harlem Heights, which greatly encouraged the Americans. Washington remained several weeks on the high ground in the vicinity of the house of Col. Roger Morris, until Howe, not caring to risk a direct attack, withdrew his forces, and landed them at Throg's Point in Westchester County, with a view to cutting off all communication with the eastern state. At the same time, he sent several frigates up the Hudson River, to cut off supplies from the south and west. In this emergency, Washington was forced to withdraw his main army from the island. Detaching a force for the defense of Fort Washington, he retired with the remainder to White Plains, where an engagement took place with the British on the twenty-eighth of October, after which he retired to the heights of North Castle. Howe now returned to Kingsbridge, and invested the garrison at Fort Washington.

This fort was situated on the shore of the North River, about two and a half miles below Kingsbridge. The hill was steep and difficult of access on all sides except the south, which was commanded by the fort, and surrounded on all sides by redoubts and batteries. Three lines of intrenchments extended across the island from the Harlem, to the North River. The position was considered a strong one, but the works were unfinished and defended only by a few old pieces of artillery; while the force detailed to guard the works was insufficient for so extensive an undertaking. On the fifteenth of November, the British demanded the surrender of the fort. The Americans refused; and an attack, with heavy cannonading of the works was begun the following morning. The Americans were defeated at all points, and before the day was over were compelled to surrender; nearly three thousand being made prisoners, and confined in the prisons of the city.

## PRISONS AND PRISON-SHIPS.

From the time of the occupation of the city by the British, New York became the "British prison-house." In 1776, five thousand American prisoners who had been captured at the

battles of Long Island, and Fort Washington, were in the city, and this number was continually increased during the succeeding years of the Revolution. Every available building was used as a dungeon for the soldiers of the American Army. The sailors were crowded into the Prison-ships of the bay and the East River. At first the officers were required to give parole, and were allowed, under strict surveillance of the British guard, to occupy lodgings in the town. This was later revoked, and the officers were confined in the old Provost Prison. The Brick Church in Beekman street was first used as a prison, and then converted into a hospital for the sick among the prisoners, as were also the Friend's Meeting-house on Pearl street, and the Presbyterian Church in Wall street, while the French Church in Pine street was made a depot for military stores. The North Dutch Church in William street, and the Middle Dutch Church were dismantled, and used for prisons. Here they were denied both fuel and bedding; had but little food, and that of the poorest possible quality. The well and sick were crowded together, the latter without care, except such as could be given by comrades or outsiders; and the dead were left at the door of the prison, for the "dead-cart" to remove once a day. These were carried beyond the intrenchments, and "thrown into a hole, promiscuously," without the usual rites of sepulture. Many of the prisoners were poisoned by their attendants, "for the sake of their watches or silvers buckles."

Just to the east of the Middle Dutch Church stood the old Sugar-House, a stone building, five stories in height, with thick walls, and small deep windows, built for a sugar refinery. Each story was divided into two rooms, with ceilings so low, and windows so small, that air could scarce find entrance under the most favorable conditions. A ponderous door opened on Liberty street to the court-yard, and a broad flagged walk extended about the building, where two British or Hessian soldiers were constantly pacing, night and day. On the southeast a heavy door opened into a dismal cellar also used as a prison. The yard was surrounded by a close board fence nine feet high. Secured by locks and bars, and constantly guarded, "huddled so closely they could scarcely breathe"—The American prisoners were left for weeks and months, destitute of fire and blankets and with no other clothes than those which they had

worn on their entrance, to while away the hours of their captivity, by carving their names on the walls with rusty nails—often the only clue to their probable fate; for the typhus fever raged fiercely among them; and the dead-cart paid daily visits, bearing away the writers ere they could finish the rude epitaphs.

The prisoners were let out in companies of twenty, for half an hour at a time, to breathe the fresh air. "Inside they were so crowded that they divided into squads of six each: Number one stood for ten minutes as close to the window as they could crowd; then number two took their places; and so on. Seats there were none; and the beds were but straw, infested with vermin." A prisoner relating his experience after release, states that the provision consisted of pork and sea-biscuit; "the biscuit had been wet with sea-water, and damaged, was full of worms and mouldy. It was the common practice to put water in the camp-kettle, then break the biscuit into it, skim off the worms, put in the pork and boil it—if we had fuel—but this was allowed only a part of the time; and when we could get no fuel, we ate our meat raw and our biscuit dry."

Columbia College was used for a short time as a prison, as were the dungeons below the City Hall, the main floor being used as a Guard House. The Bridewell, which was unfinished at the beginning of the Revolution, having only iron bars at the windows to keep out the cold, was utilized at once, without completion; and after the battle of Fort Washington eight hundred prisoners captured in that engagement were confined here, without food, for three days.

The most notorious prison on land, however, was the New Jail, or Provost, named from having been the headquarters of the Provost Marshal at the time of the Revolution, and one of the most infamous men in the English Army. This was appointed as the place of confinement for the most notorious "rebels," civil, naval, and military. The northeast room was designated Congress Hall, and to it were assigned all officers, and persons of superior rank, and special distinction. An eye-witness of the conditions here, stated that "so closely were they packed, that when their bones ached at night, from lying on the hard oak planks, and they wished to turn, it could only be done by word of command: 'Right'—'Left'—being so wedged and compact as to form almost a solid mass of human

bodies." Here, however, the walls and floors were kept clean, and the rooms ventilated—a luxury not enjoyed in the other prisons. The patriots were, however, subject to additional indignities, as their jailor, wishing to entertain or amuse his guests among the English officers, would parade his prisoners around the court-yard, as specimens of the American Army. He was also wont to mix a slow poison with their food, and he it was who boasted that he had thus killed more of the rebels with his own hand, than had been slain by all the King's forces in America.

In all these prisons and prison-ships every indignity that could be devised was heaped upon the inmates in the hope of completely crushing them, and the spirit of the army, by disabling those who had been taken prisoners, for future service; and terrifying the remainder. And throughout all these persecutions one hope of release from suffering was always held out to them: that of enlistment in the British Army. But despite this life of worse than death, the loyalty of the Americans never wavered. Very, very few could ever be induced to forswear allegiance to the cause of Liberty.

Gradually the churches and sugar-houses were relieved of their inmates; but the Provost and City Hall continued to be used as prisons until the day of the evacuation of New York by the British. The story of the city prisons was repeated on the notorious prison-ships. The first of these were the freight ships which brought the British troops to Staten Island in 1776; several of these old hulks were used at different periods of the war, among which were the "Good Hope", "Whitby", "Falmouth", "Prince of Wales", "Scorpion", "Strombolo", "Hunter", "Kitty", "Providence", "Bristol", "Jersey", &c. Of these the "Jersey" gained the greatest notoriety. A 64 gun ship, she had been condemned in 1776, as unfit for use, and utterly dismantled, being used only as a store-ship. In 1780, the prisoners on the "Good Hope" burnt that vessel, in hope of regaining their liberty. The leaders in this act were removed to the Provost, and the remainder transferred to the "Jersey." Life on these prison-ships was similar to that in the prisons; and while the reputation of the "Jersey" has been better known, because of its size, the testimony of the occupants shows that the experience of one was repeated in all.

The daily rations consisted of biscuit, beef or pork, and peas,

to which butter, suet, oatmeal and flour were occasionally added. The biscuit was mouldy, literally crawling with worms; the butter and suet rancid, and unsavory to the highest degree; the peas damaged, the meal and flour often sour; and the meat tainted, and boiled in the impure water from about the shop, in a large copper kettle, which soon becoming corroded, and encrusted with verdigris, mingled slow poison with all its contents. The dead-boat made its daily rounds of the ships, as did the dead-cart on land; and the prisoners were carried to the shore and interred in shallow trenches in the sand, perhaps to be washed out by the next tide. It was estimated that eleven thousand were thus buried from the "Jersey" alone.

Attempts were made to effect an exchange of prisoners, and thus alleviate the sufferings of these patriots both on land and sea; but every effort of this kind was unsuccessful, and Washington, heart-sick, and saddened, that his efforts should prove so ineffectual, was compelled to permit them to remain until the close of the war.

The loss of Fort Lee, on the opposite side of the river, soon followed that of Fort Washington and the main army was forced to retreat through New Jersey; and New York City, during the remainder of the war became the headquarters of the British army, and the residence of its principal officers.

To the Americans, the loss of New York was not so great a misfortune as at first appeared. While a strategic point for a naval power, it was useless to one lacking a navy. To have held and defended it successfully, a large naval force would have been necessary; otherwise, it could easily have been cut off from the supplies of the upper valley and the mainland.

To the English, its possession was the greatest possible advantage; and it was the principal point in the whole campaign, as outlined by the Home government. With New York as a central point, and base of supplies, they hoped, by control of the Hudson, to cut off entirely, the Eastern from the Southern Colonies. By Burgoyne's invasion from the north, and the union of his forces with those of Howe and Clinton, the separation would be complete, and each section could be crushed in turn, and properly punished for rebellion.

The control of the middle and upper Hudson, however, by the Americans, checked the advance of any considerable force

from the coast, and the reception accorded the northern invader, effectually prevented the separation of the Colonies. Hemmed in by patriots, and with Washington constantly threatening the city, by his movements in New Jersey during the last years of the war, Clinton was helpless to move, or to use his army for the assistance or relief of the British forces in the south, until too late. When the British had finally been cornered at Yorktown, Washington, by a sudden feint caused Clinton to gather in, and concentrate all his energies to meet the expected attack upon New York; then, by forced marches, the American army crossed the Delaware, marching into Virginia to receive the surrender of Cornwallis, leaving the British army in New York, helpless and chagrined.

### THE NORTHERN VALLEY.

Almost at the beginning of hostilities, the Provincial Congress realized the importance of securing the neutrality of the Indians of the state. General Schuyler, who knew them well, and was supposed to have much influence with them, was directed to disarm them, and secure their friendship. General Schuyler at once repaired to Johnson Hall, the former home of Sir William Johnson, who had owned a large tract of land in the Upper Hudson Valley, and to whom the Indians were especially loyal. The journey was made over the snow, in company with Col. Herkimer, accompanied by the Tryon County Militia. Sir John Johnson had succeeded to his father's estate and influence; and a promise of neutrality was secured from him. Sir Guy Johnson, however, went westward among the Indians, and later, went with a party of them to Montreal, and offered his services to the British. Sir John Johnson, surrounded by his loyalist neighbors, remained quiet for a time, but afterward broke his parole, and intrigued with his former allies.

The capture of Ticonderoga and Crown Point by the Americans with all the supplies stored at these points, delayed the intended invasion of New York from the north for at least a year. A new supply of stores of all kinds had to be transported with the army, and its movements were much retarded thereby. But early in 1777, word reached the patriots that the long expected invasion was about to be made; and preparations were forthwith begun to meet the advancing army.

The entire province of New York was designated as the Northern Department, and Washington assigned General Schuyler to the Command; who advanced to the vicinity of Albany, and gathered forces and supplies. Several attempts were made to turn Burgoyne from his purpose, or prevent his advance, but he pushed steadily onward, until he reached Fort Edward, at which point he sought to secure supplies from the surrounding country. A detachment was sent into the present state of Vermont, and was met at Bennington by an American force under General Stark; and the battle of Bennington was a decided victory for the Americans. In the meantime, a force of Tories and Indians had been sent from Canada by way of Lake Ontario to Oswego, to proceed thence to the Mohawk Valley, destroy the outlying settlements, and join Burgoyne at Albany.

But the Dutch settlers of the Mohawk made such determined resistance that they never advanced beyond Fort Stanwix. The fiercely contested battle of Oriskany, and a ruse of the force despatched by Schuyler to the relief of Fort Stanwix, so disheartened the invaders that further advance was abandoned, and they retired from the field.

This news reached Burgoyne close upon the defeat at Bennington; but still hoping to effect a juncture with the British force which was to have met him from New York, he continued to advance. So confident was he of success, that he had planned his camps at various points between Albany and New York; the places selected being the villages of Kaatsbaan, Coxsackie, and Kaatskill.

But Howe, in New York, was much occupied by the movements of Washington's army in New Jersey; he feared the occupation by the Americans of Philadelphia or New York, and was so undecided as to Washington's objective point, that he dared not detach a large force to co-operate with Burgoyne, who was now encamped in the vicinity of Saratoga. Here, the final engagement took place, and in a hotly contested battle, the Americans were victorious, and Burgoyne was compelled to surrender his entire force of British and Hessian troops.

The news of Burgoyne's surrender was received with great rejoicing throughout the Colonies; and decided the French government to form the alliance so long discussed, and hitherto

withheld. The news of this Alliance, following so closely upon the crushing defeat of one of its strongest armies, caused the British government to seriously consider the question of recognition of the claim of the Colonies for independence. A prolonged argument between the British leaders, followed by a close vote decided that the contest should be continued.

Just before the final battle at Saratoga, Congress had interfered in the command of the army of the North, and contrary to Washington's advice, General Schuyler had been superseded by General Gates, who had received the surrender of Burgoyne. Ignoring the fact that his predecessor had laid the foundation for this success, he, and his friends, at once claimed for him superior ability as a commanding officer; and the general elation over the success of the Northern army for a time was permitted to overshadow everything else. Washington was accused of incompetency: Gates, elated by his success at Saratoga, aspired to the chief command, and many of the patriots encouraged him. Washington's evacuation of New York and Philadelphia, and his defeats at Germantown and the Brandywine, were urged as proofs of his incompetency; the feeling of censure spread, and the change of commanders was about to be made.

On October 14th, 1777, Congress had resolved that no state should be represented by more than seven members or less than two. But two members out of the five, to which New York was entitled, were present in the Congress at this time, and one of these, William Duer, was ill. This was a situation which would lose the state her vote, since each state was allowed but one vote, the entire state delegation casting that vote. The intrigue against Washington had been a subject of consideration in the Congress, and plans had been formulated to arrest him at Valley Forge. This must, however, be voted by the Congress. Colonel Duer, having information of the action proposed, sent for his physician, and asked if he could be moved to the Congress. He was assured that such removal would be at the risk of his life, not immediately, but within the following twenty-four hours. Col. Duer at once ordered a litter to be prepared; but the opportune arrival of Gouverneur Morris from New York, and the fact that the vote of that state would be against them, becoming known to the conspirators, the matter

was abandoned. The influence of the New York delegation, however, was all that prevented the execution of the scheme.

The success of the American Commissioner to France brought about renewed efforts on the part of England to crush the Revolution. Sir William Howe was superceded by Sir Henry Clinton. The battle of Monmouth, which occurred soon after, proved an American victory; and Clinton evacuated Philadelphia, and retired to New York, where the British army had been ordered to concentrate to meet the French fleet. The fleet arrived outside New York harbor a few days later, and Washington with his army, hastened to White Plains, according to the plan of a simultaneous attack by land and sea. But the French ships were so heavy that the pilots refused to take them up the bay, and the attack was abandoned. The British now began sending out marauding parties into the territory of the mainland, seeking forage, and laying waste the surrounding country. On one of these expeditions Clinton captured Stony Point, and Verplanck's Point, on the opposite side of the Hudson. General Anthony Wayne, however, in a brilliant sally, recaptured Stony Point.

The winter of 1778-89 was one of unusual severity, and the British commander-in-chief ordered the owners of woodland on Staten and Long Island to cut, and bring it into the market, under penalty of forcible seizure. But even these orders failed to bring a sufficient supply. Meantime the American army was wintering in New Jersey, and suffering not only from lack of fuel, but of provisions, and clothing, and from depreciation of the Continental currency.

In the spring of 1786 the British forces made an attempt to wrest the province of New Jersey from the Americans. A detachment of five thousand men crossed from Staten Island; took possession of Elizabethtown, and burned Connecticut farms. But the Americans were alert, and the British were compelled to retire.

#### THE JERSEY SHORE.

Early in the war, a fort had been erected at Paulus Hook, which had been captured by the British after their occupation of New York; but the immediate left bank of the Hudson was not the scene of active operations.

On that side of the river, however, resided many loyal Americans who gave as they could, for the relief of the patriot sufferers. Among these, were Daniel Van Reypen, and his sister, Jane Van Reypen Tuer. Mrs. Tuer frequently carried food across the river to the American soldiers imprisoned in New York. On one of these trips, during the summer of 1780, she met Samuel Francis, who informed her that he had heard British officers frequenting his house, mention a conspiracy in the American army. She repeated the message to her brother, who at once made a trip to Hackensack, and conveyed the information to General Wayne, who sent a warning to Washington. Thus, three days before the capture of André, the treachery of Arnold was known. Later when Van Reypen was offered a reward for his services, he indignantly refused, saying: "I do not serve my country for money." In this vicinity, also were the Van Winkle sisters, Catherine and Maria, who frequently carried messages from Lafayette to Washington at Belleville. Sergeant John Champe, another who rendered service in connection with the Arnold treachery, was also a Jerseyman, from the Hudson valley. After Arnold had escaped and joined the British in New York, a strong desire existed among the Americans to capture him and bring him back for trial. John Champe, under advice from the American leaders, pretended to desert, was pursued, but escaped, and swam the river, to New York, where he was warmly welcomed by Arnold. He at once gained free access to his home, and made with the aid of certain trusted friends, all plans for his capture. But the day before that fixed for the execution of the plan, Champe was ordered to embark for the Chesapeake, and Arnold moved to another house. Champe afterwards deserted from the British army in the south, and returned to his comrades to clear his name and fame.

#### THE MIDDLE VALLEY OF THE HUDSON.

During all the stirring scenes, in and around New York, the surrounding country shared in the popular excitement. On the 27th of May, 1775, in response to the call for a Provincial Congress, delegates from the several counties assembled in New York, and efficient measures for the military organization, and defense of the Colony were immediately taken. Arms and commissary supplies for the militia were ordered col-

lected, and arrangements were made for the purchase, or if necessary, taking by force, of supplies. Two regiments of soldiers were authorized to be raised; bounties were offered for the manufacture of powder and muskets in the province; and fortifications were projected at Kingsbridge and the Highlands. County Committees of Safety and Observation were appointed; the Pledge, or Association Test, drafted after the battle of Lexington, was circulated through the counties. This Pledge promised assistance to the cause to the full extent of life and property. It received as ready an endorsement as had the Non-Importation Acts of earlier years. The people of the valley were generally loyal, though many royalists remained in their midst. The eastern bank of the river was more especially frequented by Tory sympathizers, spies, cowboys, skinners, etc., Yonkers being about the centre of the neutral territory. The settlements a few miles from the western bank were compelled to suffer the attacks of a more savage foe; with the horror of massacre a daily possibility. They held in check the incursions of the Indians and their Tory allies. The mountain regions both east and west were found to contain ores of lead and iron, which were soon utilized for the needs of the army.

In Dutchess County, April, 1777, the lead mines near Great Nine Partners were explored more or less successfully by agents of the Congress. In 1776, even, petition was made to the New York Congress for exemption from military duty of the workmen engaged in the manufacture of fire-arms in the contracts made with Congress.

In Orange and Ulster Counties, several patriots were engaged in the manufacture of gun powder for the American government. At Kingston was forged one of the chains which was stretched across the river to prevent the passage of the British ships, and at Poughkeepsie were built two of the vessels ordered by Congress; also the boom, composed of timbers and iron chains used at Anthony's Nose.

When the British threatened New York, the deliberations were conducted under constant excitement and alarm; and the places of meeting were constantly changed. On July 6th, 1776, the Congress assembled at White Plains, and took the title, "Representatives of the State of New York." Proceedings:

were conducted with closed doors, and only members of unquestioned loyalty, who were pledged to secrecy, were permitted to copy the Minutes of the meeting. On the first day of its assembly the Congress received, from the Continental Congress, the Declaration of Independence. It was ordered read, and immediately received a vote of approval. During this session a law was enacted "that all persons residing in the State, and enjoying the protection of its laws, who should be found guilty of siding with its enemies, should suffer death."

In the Autumn of 1776, after the evacuation of New York by the Americans, and the consequent loss of the sea-board, the operations of the army retreated further into the country. Fishkill, from its safe position, north of Highlands, and its proximity to the fortifications at West Point, became a place of consideration. The village was crowded with refugees from New York, and Long Island. The stores for the army were deposited there, workshops were established, and hospitals opened wherever available. After the battle of White Plains, the wounded from the battle were carried to Fishkill, and those who died were buried there. Small-pox also made havoc in the camp. It is doubtful if any other place in the State has as many of the dead of the Revolution, known and unknown, buried in it, as the town of Fishkill. Its churches were used as hospitals, and the Episcopal Church, also called Trinity, was also used as a meeting-place for the New York Legislature, when it adjourned from White Plains to Fishkill, on the third of September, 1776.

Samuel Loudon, who had published a patriotic paper in New York, up to the time of its evacuation, removed his press and materials to Fishkill. This was the only paper that could be found that would publish news of public interest. In 1777, Loudon, still at Fishkill, printed the Constitution of New York, which was the first, as well the most important book printed in the State.

Baron Steuben at one time made his headquarters here, when the army was encamped at Newburgh, occupying the Verplanck house, and in this house was also organized the Society of the Cincinnati, in 1783. A sword was forged here during the Revolution for General Washington, and of him is told the story that when he visited the town, the residents

crowded to meet him, seeking to show great deference by the removal of their hats. He gently reproved them, saying, "Gentlemen, put on your hats; I am but a man like yourselves, and I wish no such deference shown me."

Fishkill was also the scene of a "tea-party" of its own during this period. One Adam Brinkerhoff, a store-keeper, held a large quantity of tea, for which he charged exorbitant prices. The women of the neighborhood, exasperated at his greed, organized into a company under the leadership of one of their number, and marched in military order to his store. The following is the story, as told in a publication of that time:

"August 28th, 1776—A few days since, about 100 women, inhabitants of Dutchess County, went to the house of Col. Brinckerhoff at Fishkill, and insisted upon having tea at the lawful price of six shillings per pound, and obliged that gentleman to accommodate them with one chest from his store for that purpose. Shortly after he sold his cargo to some Yorkers, who for fear of another female attack forwarded the nefarious stuff to the North River, precipitately, where it is now afloat, but the women have placed their guard on each side."

This vicinity was the scene of many events in the experience of Enoch Crosby, the noted spy of the Revolution. On one of his excursions through the country, he learned that a band of Tories was organizing a company for the British service. He made friends with some of the leaders, agreed to go with them and attended one of their meetings. After the meeting adjourned, he made a night journey to White Plains, returning before daylight. At his suggestion, another meeting was held the following evening, and while in session the meeting place was surrounded by patriots, and all were made prisoners. They were taken to Fishkill and confined in the old Dutch church. The trial was conducted by the Committee of Safety, which met at the Wharton House, and the prisoners were condemned, but as they were led away, Crosby was left alone for a few minutes with the Committee, and made his escape.

Extending northeast, the range of the Highlands is known as the Fishkill Mountains, or Beacon Hills. During the Revolution, these were used for signal fires to warn the surrounding country. The one known as Butter Hill gave the first signal, which was repeated by the North and South Beacons. These hills are of great height in this section, and the signals could be seen for a great distance. The signals were prepared with pyramidal piles of logs, brush and other inflammable material, ready to ignite at a moment's notice, and carry the message to the watchers beyond.

On July 14, 1777, the Continental Congress adopted a national banner, and advised the several Colonies to form State organizations. Several at once acted upon this suggestion; and in New York a committee had already been formed to frame a State Constitution, which was presented to the Legislators for consideration in March, 1777. On the twentieth of April it was adopted and published on the twenty-second; the Secretary of the Committee standing on a barrel before the place of meeting, and reading the document to the delegates and the assembled crowd. By this Constitution the office of Governor was made elective and the legislative power was vested in two bodies, also elective. George Clinton, a man distinguished for his patriotism was chosen as the first Governor of the State, a position which he continued to hold for eighteen years. John Jay was appointed Chief Justice, and Robert R. Livingston, Chancellor. Philip Livingston, James Duane, Francis Lewis, William Duer and Gouverneur Morris, were at the same time appointed delegates to represent the State in the Continental Congress.

The first meeting of the new Legislature was called at Kingston on the first day of August, 1777, but the conditions of public safety were such, that it was deemed unsafe for the session to assemble, and the date of meeting was changed to the twentieth of August, and then to the first of September. The Assembly opened its session on this date, but the Senate was unable to meet officially until the tenth, because they had not a quorum. On this date, September the tenth, 1777, the three branches of the State government were formally organized. On the ninth, the Supreme Court held its first sitting in the old Court House, and Chief Justice Jay

here delivered his first charge to the first Grand Jury. The opening sentence of this charge is worthy of deep consideration :

“The Americans are the first people whom Heaven has favored with an opportunity of deliberating upon, and choosing, the form of government under which they should live; all other constitutions have derived their existence from violence, or accidental circumstances.”

The Assembly organized at the hotel of Evart Bogardus, and the Senate officially assembled in the house of Abraham Van Gaasbeek, the building still known as the Old Senate House. This building was erected in 1676 by Colonel Wessel Ten Broeck. It is constructed of native limestone, except the rear, which is built of large bricks, imported from Holland. The Senate continued to hold its meetings here, until it adjourned, on the approach of a British detachment, to Fort Montgomery, in the Highlands, October 4, 1777. During this session the Legislature passed the famous act, confiscating the property of all Tory sympathizers.

In this alarm, the last session of the Council of Safety was held at the tavern of Conrad Elmendorf, the Council transacting the final business while the force of British soldiers was advancing upon them. All persons then in jail were ordered transferred to Hartford, Conn., for safe keeping; all money and records were directed to be removed to Rochester, Orange County; a new Council of Safety was ordered to be appointed, and the messenger who arrived with the news of Burgoyne's surrender was voted a reward of 50£. This was matter for great rejoicing, despite the danger which threatened Kingston.

It is evident that Burgoyne had realized the seriousness of his position for some time before his final engagement, as he had sent word to Clinton that unless he could have relief before October twelfth, his situation was hopeless; and reinforcements were daily expected from England which were to be immediately sent north.

The Americans had concentrated their defenses at a narrow, curved place on the Hudson, near West Point, and in

addition to Fort Clinton and Fort Montgomery on either side, a boom chain had been extended across the river, and the position was considered a strong one. So strong, in fact, that Clinton dared not risk a direct attack.

By a feigned attack at one point, the British were able to surprise the defenses in the rear, and the Americans were forced to surrender. On the very day of the capitulation of Burgoyne's army, Clinton, having caused the destruction of every American vessel as far as the mouth of Esopus Creek, ordered General Vaughn to advance and destroy Kingston. He met no opposition, the residents having taken refuge elsewhere; and after destroying as much of the town as he could, he advanced still further up the river, doing much damage.

One of the many homes destroyed was the old Clermont Manor, the home of the Livingstons. The mother of the Chancellor had taken into her home and cared for, a wounded British officer, and as Vaughn's forces advanced, a messenger was dispatched to inform her that, because of this kindly act, her home would be spared. Mistress Livingston returned the answer that it never should be said that she had secured protection for her house by such a compromise. She directed the removal of the wounded officer to a place of safety, and gathering a few valuables, she and her family abandoned the house, which was immediately destroyed by the soldiers of Vaughn.

The fate of the army of invaders on the north was now rapidly becoming known; the American soldiers were pushing southward, to protect their homes; and the British again retreated to New York.

During the summer of 1777, two British frigates were anchored near Yonkers, an act which the Americans greatly resented; finally endeavoring, by a boat expedition, to destroy them; which attempt came near being a success, but they were finally compelled to abandon the attack.

On the Tarrytown road, near Sleepy Hollow, a simple obelisk has been erected to mark the place where Major John André was captured, bearing upon his person the documents which revealed the treachery of Benedict Arnold. This is one of the darkest pages of the history of the time, but the story is too familiar to be repeated here.

The interruptions of the sessions of the Legislature had been so frequent that they seemed now to require official preparation; and in March, 1778, a concurrent resolution of the two Houses directed the Secretary of State, Clerks of the Counties, and other officers to place their records in strong and light enclosures, to be ready for instant removal in case of danger.

The winter of 1780-81 differed little from those of preceding years. The soldiers grumbled at their scanty fare and arrears of pay, the Pennsylvania troops even going so far as to leave the army. Sir Henry Clinton at once dispatched commissaries to offer them inducements to abandon the American cause, and enlist in the British army; but the indignant patriots seized the messengers and delivered them over to Congress, to be treated as spies. A deputation from Congress made an appeal to the country for relief; taxes and requisitions were made for money, ammunition and clothing; and the emergency was thus relieved. The campaign of 1781 opened favorably for the Americans, who gained steadily throughout the year; and on the 17th of October the British army under Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown.

Great was the rejoicing, and in England the Peace Party renewed its efforts to put an end to the war. Public approval of this plan became so strong that the War Minister resigned; and Sir Guy Carleton, by whom Clinton had been superseded in command, was instructed to negotiate for an early treaty of peace. Preliminary Articles of Peace were signed at Paris on November 30, 1782, by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay and Henry Laurens, on the part of the United States. For a long time the attempt was made, by intrigue, to prevail on the American Commissioners to accept a truce of twenty years, instead of an open acknowledgement of independence; and the plan would have succeeded, had not the opportune arrival of John Jay, who firmly refused to accept such a compromise, prevented.

The English Commissioner at last reluctantly consented to the conditions imposed by Jay, and on the third of September, 1783, signed a definite Treaty, on the part of Great Britain, recognizing the independence of the United States, and fixing its boundaries.

After the surrender at Yorktown, Washington returned with his army to the Hudson Valley, making his headquarters at Newburgh, while the larger part of the army was stationed at West Point, which had been rendered an almost impregnable fortress. During the weary months of waiting the Treaty of Peace, great dissatisfaction, because of the unsettled conditions, prevailed throughout the American army, and many were led to believe that there was but one solution for the problems confronting them. This sentiment found expression in the famous "Newburgh Letters," resulting in the offer to Washington to become "the Protector" of the nation. Washington's dismay, when the plan was made known to him, and his instant rejection of the offer, was one of the strongest tests of his matchless character. His consent alone was needed to raise the flag of Treason, and place him at the head of an adoring army, with which he could have carried out any self-seeking ends. But there was no self-seeking in the unfaltering loyalty with which he had served his country. The eminence offered him would, in his own words, have "overturned the liberties of our country, opened the flood-gates of civil discord, and deluged our rising empire in blood." The cause for which he and other patriots had fought would have been lost; and the foundations of the greatest Republic the world has known would have been destroyed.

A cessation of hostilities had been proclaimed in the American camp on the nineteenth of April, 1783, the eighth anniversary of the battle of Lexington, and on the third day of November, by order of the Continental Congress, the army was disbanded. Governor George Clinton, for the Americans, and Sir Guy Carlton, Commander of the British army, met in Livingston Manor at Dobb's Ferry, to confer on the plans for the evacuation of New York; and on the twenty-fifth of November the Americans returned to the city. The entrance of the army, under command of General Washington, was made at noon by the Bowery, then the only road; while the British, at the same hour, evacuated the city, went aboard their ships, and sailed slowly down the bay. General Knox was detailed to take command of the fort, with the militia. The Stars and Stripes, now the American ensign, for the first time was unfurled above the city; a triumphant salute

was fired by the artillery; and after seven years of foreign occupation, the City of New York, and the lower Valley of the Hudson, was again in possession of its citizens.

On the evening of December the fourth, in the Long Room of the famous Fraunces' Tavern, the officers of the army assembled to take farewell of their Commander-in-Chief. The scene became one of the most memorable in our history; for overcome by affection for their beloved General, under whom they had served for eight long and faithful years, their parting was marked by deep and silent emotion.

From it, and still silently, Washington passed through the assembled throngs of a grateful and devoted people, to surrender his Commission to the Continental Congress, waiting in Philadelphia.

Thus has the Valley of the Hudson been the scene of many of the most important events of State and National History. Here originated some of the most important measures leading up to the Revolution. It was the meeting place of the first Continental Congress; the first Provincial Congress; the State Constitution was formed here; this became the seat of the State government, and it was selected as the site of the first Capital of our National government.

It has been closely associated with the most important events in the life of Washington—his defeats and victories; his darkest days and his brightest. Here he refused a Monarchy; here he took the Oath of Office as first President of the Republic he had helped to create. The Valley has been the scene of one of the great decisive battles of the world; and it has also witnessed the greatest developments for civilization and advancement of the human race. It has given to the Nation some of its greatest statemen, novelists and poets; teachers and scientists. Its sons and daughters are carrying onward, ever onward, the Truths of its National Life—Liberty and Peace. It became known to the civilized world in an era of peace—it has had its Baptism of Fire: May it be the Harbinger of Peace until time shall cease.

And for our country what more fitting benediction than the brief words of Washington, when he laid his Commission on the table, and officially returned his sword to the President of the Continental Congress:

"I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last act of my official life by commanding the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God; and those who have the superintendence of its welfare to His Holy Keeping."

On September 29th, 1909, Washington Heights Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, will place a tablet to mark the "First Line of Defense" of Fort Washington, and the following sketch has been prepared by Mr. Reginald F. Bolton.

Historical Account  
of the  
"First Line of Defense."

The fortification of that part of Manhattan now known as Washington Heights, which was in 1776 included in the general title of the Heights of Harlem, centered at the Citadel of Fort Washington, but included surrounding works on all points of vantage, admirably selected by the officers of the American army, and constructed with infinite labor, by the men of the small army of defense.

On the southerly side the defenses consisted of three lines of earth-works, known as the First, the Second, and the Third, respectively situated on the approximate lines of 147th, 153rd, and 159th to 162nd streets.

Of these, by far the most elaborate and regularly military in character, was the First, which also was the earliest in date of construction, having been commenced during the fighting which took place on September 16, 1776, commonly referred to as the "Battle of Harlem Heights," during which the reserves under General Spencer were laboring vehemently on the construction of this line of defense.

The works extended from St. Nicholas Avenue, then the King's Highway, at a redoubt on the summit of what was then, and long since known as "Break Neck Hill," and crossed the hill westward through the grounds of the Maunsell Mansion, used by General Spencer as his Division headquarters, in an irregular and zig-zag fashion to a point on the line of Broadway at 147th street, where the eminence terminated in an abrupt descent to the Hudson River.

At this point quite an elaborate redoubt was later developed, and within it and along the line, some of the small cannon, probably brought from Fort George at the Battery, were mounted.

The second line, which has already been marked by a memorial tablet on the wall of Trinity cemetery, at 153rd street, was naturally strong by reason of the rock nature of the Heights at that point.

The third line, which extended around the Lewis Hill on Riverside Drive, and irregularly across the hill-side to Washington's Headquarters, was not at any time in a fully completed condition, but its interest in connection with the others, makes it a suitable subject for a memorial tablet.

The "First line of Defense" came into active use, on October 27, 1776, when an attack in force was made upon it by the British troops moving from the neighborhood of Harlem, aided by two war vessels in the Hudson.

The garrison, promptly manning the Line, successfully resisted the advance of the British forces, and Colonel Robert Magaw, in command at Fort Washington, brought down one of the two heavy guns mounted in the fort, and nearly succeeded in sinking one of the British war vessels by its well directed fire.

On the occasion of the final assault upon Fort Washington, November 16, 1776, a similar, but much more formidable attack was made upon the First line of defense, by a combined force of British and Hessians, of about four thousand men, again under the general command of Lieut. General, the Earl Percy.

The Line was on this occasion defended by a small body of 600 Pennsylvanians, aided by a detachment of the Connecticut Rangers, who together gallantly opposed the advance of the overwhelming force until their position was rendered untenable by the landing of the Forty-second Highlanders, in the rear of their position; when they fell back upon the Fort, stoutly disputing the way, until they, and its other defenders found themselves enclosed by the circle of fourteen thousand opponents, and were marched into the bitter captivity of New York prison-houses, and ships, from which so many of them emerged only on the way to their graves.

## HISTORIC SPOTS IN THE HUDSON VALLEY.

Marked by the Chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

### New Jersey.

“Camp Middlebrook,” “General Frelinghuysen”—“Jersey Blue” have marked Washington’s Headquarters in the Wallace House, Somerville, N. J.

### New York.

“Bronx”—“Glovers Rock”—the place of the skirmish preliminary to the Battle of White Plains.

“Fort Greene”—Monument to the Prison-ship Martyrs.

Memorial tablet in the old Dutch Church, Long Island.

Moved the legislature to restore the name “Fort Greene” to the burial place of the Prison-ship Martyrs.

“Jane McCrea”—Monument to Jane McCrea, at Fort Edward.

“Johnstown”—Tablet commemorating Johnstown Battle.

Restoration of Old Colonial Cemetery.

“Keskeskick”—Restoration and care of Phillipse Manor.

“Knickerbacker”—Tablet to Anneke Jans.

Tablet to Mary Murray.

“Mahwenawasigh”—Tablet commemorating Ratification of the Constitution, at Poughkeepsie.

Monument to commemorate the same (in connection with the Legislature and other Chapters).

Preservation of General Clinton’s House.

“Mary Washington Colonial”—Tablet in the general Post Office, to mark the place of the Liberty Pole, repeatedly torn down by Tories and re-erected by the Sons of Liberty.

Tablet on the Hall of Records—the “Provost Prison.”

Tablet of Brooklyn Bridge, marking place of the first Presidential Mansion.

Tablet to Margaret Corbin.

“Melzingah”—Tablet on La Fayette Monument.  
Monument to Revolutionary Soldiers buried at Fishkill.  
Monument on the old Post Road.  
Steel Flag-staffs on the Revolutionary Redoubts at Fishkill.

“Melzingah”—Tablet on Adam Brinkerhoff’s mill.  
Marking of the North Beacon, at Fishkill.

“Mohawk”—Restoration of Fort Crailo.

“Nathaniel Woodhull”—Tablet in memory of Gen. Nathaniel Woodhull, Long Island.

“New York City”—Silver Tablet at Tarrytown, in the Avery House.

“Quissaick”—Tablet, marking Palatine Parish, the Huguenot settlement.

Boulder marking Brewster Forge, where the chain was forged to stretch across the Hudson to prevent the passage of the British war-ships.

“Saratoga”—Boulders marking the road from Saratoga Springs to Bemis Heights, commemorating the battle fought there.

“Washington Heights”—Tablet on the Morris House, dedicated to General Washington.

Care of Hamilton Grange, summer home of Alexander Hamilton.

“White Plains”—Preservation of the Building in which the first State Legislature met.

“Washington Heights,” “Knickerbocker,” “Manhattan” and “Mary Washington Colonial” have formed the “Washington Headquarters Association,” and have been accorded by the Legislature the custody of the Roger Morris, or Jumel Mansion, which was Washington’s Headquarters for a time after the evacuation of New York.





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